

In the Claims:

1 - 10 (Canceled)

11. (New) A method of preventing illegitimate use of a network protocol consisting of a stream of data packets, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

calculating a delay that is an increasing function of the bit rate of a stream coming from a machine; and

forwarding packets of said stream after said delay.

12. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein the delay function depends on the value of a count (CPT_N) of data packets of said stream.

13. (New) The method according to claim 12, wherein the delay function has a positive second derivative.

14. (New) The method according to claim 12, further comprising:

a step of determining a maximum permissible value ($CPTMAX_N$) of the bit rate for the stream; and

a step of destroying waiting data packets if the number of data packets that has arrived exceeds the maximum permissible value ($CPTMAX_N$).

15. (New) The method according to claim 11, further comprising a step of stopping the calculation of the delay for said stream if the count (CTP_N) of packets is below a predefined value.

16. (New) The method according to claim 11, wherein the stream under surveillance is of the signaling protocol type.

17. (New) The method according to claim 11, further comprising:
a step of detecting a change of the bit rate associated with said stream toward a maximum value and a maximum reduction of said bit rate toward a zero bit rate; and
a step of producing and sending an alarm.

18. (New) The method according to claim 16, wherein the method adapts automatically and:

in a normal operation step during which the protocol is used as intended, the packet count retains a value less than a predetermined value and greater than or equal to 0;

in an abnormal operation step during which the system is subject to an attack, the count increases; and

in a subnormal operation step during which the system is used momentarily beyond its limits, the count retains a value less than a predefined value.

19. (New) A device for processing a stream of data packets coming from a machine, wherein the device comprises delay means for delaying forwarding of the stream coming from said machine by a delay that is an increasing function of the bit rate of said stream.

20. (New) A telecommunications system adapted to process data traffic comprising at least one stream of data packets coming from a machine, wherein the system comprises delay means for delaying forwarding of at least one stream coming from said machine by a delay that is an increasing function of said bit rate.

21. (New) A computer program including instructions for executing the steps of the method according to claim 11 when said program is executed on a computer.

22. (New) A processor adapted to execute the computer program according to claim 21.